

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 and 23-26, as amended appear in this application.

Claims 1, 16 and 18 are amended herein to further define the invention and to facilitate prosecution of the application. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the actual thickness of the layer is adjusted by simultaneously treating the entire surface of the layer selectively in accordance with the thickness adjustment specification, as supported by paragraph [0109] of the published application. Claims 16 and 18 have also been amended similarly. Claim 18 has been further amended to clarify that batches of layers can be treated by conducting a single thickness adjustment specification for a first layer and then using this specification to adjust the actual thickness of each layer in the batch of layers. This is supported by paragraphs [0160] and [0161] of the published specification. No new matter being introduced, Applicants respectfully request entry of these amendments.

Applicants repeat and adopt herein their previous comments regarding the previously cited references to Vuong, Ferrel et al. and Wolf. In addition, the amendment of the current claims to state that the actual thickness of the layer is adjusted by simultaneously treating the entire surface of the layer selectively in accordance with the thickness adjustment specification further distinguishes applicants' invention from those references.

Vuong does not selectively treat the entire surface of the layer simultaneously, but instead uses a "profile model and parameter selection" for fabrication cluster "feed-forward or feed-backward control loops". Vuong has no explicit mention of changing a layer thickness according to a thickness adjustment specification, let alone by doing this selectively and simultaneously on the entire surface of the layer.

Ferrell and/or Wolf are equally irrelevant. Ferrell discloses only a method for indexing and retrieving manufacturing-specific digital images based on image content, in particular, a method for extracting one or more features from digital semiconductor images and recording and indexing the images.

Wolf discloses only formation of a SiO₂ layer on Si by oxidation. The oxide layer thickness is measured (p. 235, line 2), and different techniques, such as optical

interference, ellipsometry, capacitance, and color charts, are available for this purpose (p.235, lines 4-6).

Since all claims that the actual thickness of the layer is adjusted by simultaneously treating the entire surface of the layer selectively in accordance with the thickness adjustment specification, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections based on the Vuong, Ferrel et al. and/or Wolf references have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance, early notice of which would be appreciated. Should any issues remain, a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss the same in order to expedite the allowance of all the claims in this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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